

# Impact Report 2020-21



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# Chair & CEO's report

## Reflecting on the past year

### A message from our Chair, John

A couple of years ago, no one could have predicted we'd shortly be living through a pandemic. As the Chair of Trustees in a charity serving one of the worst affected groups, my colleagues and I (all fellow volunteers) worked with the leadership team to plan, adapt and take action, developing a completely new way of working within weeks.

Our centres were forced to close and our income was hit dramatically. Many older people were, rightly, frightened and in many cases, it was us they turned to in despair. In the early days, some weren't sure where their next meal was coming from and the loneliness, particularly for those living by themselves, could be devastating.

As a charity, we were acutely aware that our clients would be facing a whole range of different challenges.

With visits from family and friends restricted, support systems were stripped away. This not only affected mental health, but also left some of the most frail struggling with day to day independent living. Carers were unable to access respite and people living with dementia had their usual routines disrupted.

You'll see in the following pages, the many and varied ways we stepped in to help people at home and in the community. Staff and volunteers put aside their own worries to shop for, reassure and comfort some of the most vulnerable older people locally.

**Each Trustee meeting we heard the difference that was being made by our people on the front line and I was moved by the stories of kindness, compassion and care.**

For many older people, this year was an incredibly dark time, but I feel reassured that our charity was able to make it lighter for thousands who needed our help.



**John Dixon**  
Chair AUKWSBH



## A message from our CEO, Helen

The last year at Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove has been challenging, incredibly rewarding and, at times, heartbreaking.

Some regular visitors to our centres have sadly died from Coronavirus – people we called friends. They and their loved ones remain in our thoughts, particularly as we look back on recent months.

The effect of Covid-19 on older people has been dramatic and continues to dominate many lives. Some are finding that health conditions have worsened, some have become more isolated or frail and others are trying to cope with bereavement. In many cases, older people have borne the brunt during this incredibly tough year. Our charity and our services have never been more vital.

**I can't tell you how proud I am of the team and of the impact we made, at a time when we were needed the most.**

As an organisation, we have worked relentlessly to be there for people, no matter what they were facing. When the pandemic struck, our response was rapid and ambitious. Our incredible staff and volunteers worked tirelessly on the front line, being there for those most in need and adapting to support people in their homes – with information and advice, befriending calls and doorstep deliveries.

Despite the Covid crisis, we remained on track with our plans to offer more. We were excited to merge with Age UK Horsham District in July, creating an even stronger and more sustainable organisation. The merger sees us sharing assets and expertise, but retaining local knowledge and the individual approach we believe in. We also secured new contracts, created additional services, developed remote support mechanisms and helped many new clients as more people turned to us than ever before.

Our efforts are ongoing of course, and we have big plans for the future. This year has reinforced how crucial our work is and has demonstrated that when things get tough, our charity and its people step up. I feel incredibly lucky to lead such a dedicated team into our 65th year.

  
**Helen Rice**  
**CEO AUKWSBH**





# Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove (AUKWSBH) is the leading older people's charity in the region.

We currently support 20,000 residents and we have big ambitions. Our strategic plan sets out a framework of priorities and goals for AUKWSBH over the next five years. Older people and their changing needs are at the core of everything we do.





# Our strategic plan

## ‘Shaped by older people’

By working in close consultation with our customers, we are proud that our services are often co-designed with them.

In addition, our volunteers, staff, trustees, partners, and other stakeholders also give us incredibly valuable input. This is supported by an analysis of current activities, assets, resources, performance, demand, local and national policy developments and market trends. We never stop listening and we're confident that our work reflects older people's needs and aspirations.

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## Improving later life

We improve the quality of people's later life through community and home-based services and enterprises.

We are the leading provider of services for older people and working age adults who require support through our social prescribing service in West Sussex, Brighton and Hove. We help people access our services and those of our partners in the public, private, and voluntary sectors in order to help them thrive. We enable older people in West Sussex, Brighton and Hove to be:



### Informed

Our information and advice services help people, including carers, to know their rights and make informed choices.



### Connected

Our community and building based social clubs, events and activities provide opportunities for people to get out, have fun, socialise and build friendships.



### Healthy

Our wide range of health and wellbeing activities including fitness classes, relaxation, hobby groups, as well as 'spa' treatments help people to keep active, stay healthy and improve their mental health.



### Independent

Our home-based services support people to stay independent for longer within their own home, including after a period of ill health. They also help to prevent hospital admissions.

# Our history

## Why we started

Back in 1957, West Sussex County Council saw the need for an organisation to focus on the requirements of older people in the county. Now an independent charity, in 2022, we look forward to celebrating our 65th anniversary year.

### Our beginnings

The West Sussex association of Elderly People as it was then known started life with two staff seconded from the council. It wasn't until 1980 that we first employed our own staff and in 1998 we set up a Trading Company. In April 2010 we changed our name to Age UK West Sussex.



### Merging to offer you more

On July 1st, 2019, Age UK West Sussex and Age UK Brighton & Hove completed a merger to work together to support our communities across both areas.

In 2020 we became bigger and better through our merger with Age UK Horsham District. Now working together, we are able to share expertise, resources and local knowledge, alongside ensuring a more sustainable future for our charity. Our larger organisation can be run more efficiently and the money saved means more of each donation is able to be directly invested in frontline services.

Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove and Age UK Horsham District were both brand partners of Age UK National, but we existed as separate entities, each with a Board of Trustees and separate finances. Trustees from both organisations are now represented on our Board.

### Us today

As the Covid-19 vaccination programme allows us to return to a new 'normal,' we are planning to expand what we offer, developing new activities and support options for people at home, in our centre and in the community. While the pandemic hit our income and stretched our resources the merger remained a priority. There was no better time for us to come together and pool our resources. Our incredible team of staff and volunteers worked across West Sussex, Brighton and Hove to be there for people in crisis. We put ourselves in the best position to respond to people's needs and adapt for the future. Together we are stronger.



“We put ourselves in the best position to respond to people’s needs and adapt for the future. **Together we are stronger.**”







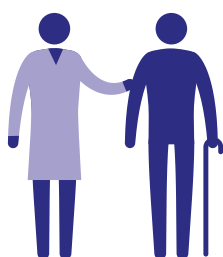
# Our achievements

## 2021 – an extraordinary year

We are incredibly proud of our achievements in what was an extraordinary year of change. The need for our services has grown more than ever and due to the flexibility and agility of our services team and volunteers we have been able to provide absolutely vital services that were a lifeline to so many during the pandemic.

# 20,000

We supported over 20,000 older people across our communities last year.



# 4,000

We provided information and advice to over 4,000 people.

# 1,800

We gave Help at Home to over 1,800 clients.



We delivered over

# 6,650

meals to older people.



We identified over **£3.8 million in benefits** that older people could claim.



# 150

We helped over 150 people with our Crisis services.

# 16,800

We made over 16,800 befriending calls.



**We manage 8 buildings across Sussex...**

Brighton, Chichester, Bognor Regis, Haywards Heath, Burgess Hill, Horsham, Crawley and our Head Office in Littlehampton.



# Our centres

## The heart of our charity

Our centres are at the very heart of our charity. Normally, they would be open across West Sussex, Brighton and Hove, offering social groups for fun, friendship and fitness. However this year, for the first time in our history, the pandemic forced us to close our doors.

Our activities usually range from exercise classes, to games and hobbies like chess and knitting. Our cafés are great places to meet and eat, with tasty food and friendly faces guaranteed.

However, things changed overnight with lockdown and while the 'stay at home' message was clear, as a frontline charity we were permitted to keep working. We redeployed our centre staff and volunteers, with an emergency response which allowed us to support as many older people as possible during the crisis.

**Many moved from their usual roles and were given new responsibilities to help people at home. We had to be there for those who were in desperate need, low on supplies but frightened to go out.**

Our people collected and organised grocery donations, arranged doorstep visits, delivered vital food and medication and took and made calls, answering queries and offering befriending at an incredibly lonely time.

We scoured our client lists, identifying and contacting the most vulnerable to ensure they had what they needed throughout the lockdown period. Three of our buildings became hubs, where we mass produced nutritious meals and co-ordinated their distribution. We worked closely with local food banks, to share space and resources, maximising our impact. We had to be completely flexible, constantly changing our approach in line with the latest Covid restrictions.

Throughout the year, we also tried to keep people's spirits up, with socially distanced chats, by distributing activity packs, books and jigsaws, delivering bags of support, cream teas and festive treat boxes and offering a listening ear. We gave advice on staying well, and for those online we offered virtual art and fitness classes.

## Getting back together

As restrictions eased, we were able to meet up with some of our members outdoors, offer carer respite by going for walks with clients living with dementia and set up outdoor cafés at some of our centres. Our staff were able to welcome back those who felt ready to return, while continuing to follow the Government guidelines that applied at the time. As we re-opened our staff and volunteers relished seeing familiar faces back in our centres. Visitor numbers remain much lower than they were pre-pandemic, but where there's demand, our dedicated team are keen to get things up and running again. We want to see our centres thriving, to offer additional services in the community and continue to support those at home.

## Terry & Karen's story

### "...her regular phone call brought me back."

**Karen, a Bognor activities co-ordinator on a normal day of working, was able to support the community in a different way during the pandemic – she became part of a team of befrienders.**

During the Covid restrictions, Karen and the other befrienders contacted lonely older people in our communities to provide a friendly ear to those most in need.

Karen used to call Terry during this time. She recalls: "We both looked forward to our weekly chats, both sharing a love of music and Terry would tell me about what he had been up to in the week. We would chat about his family and he was very excited to have had a new grandchild, he was also very grateful for our chats especially when he sadly lost someone close to him which was especially hard for him during this difficult time."

When the local centre reopened its doors Karen was delighted to see Terry and they enjoyed a cup of tea together – face to face!



**Karen says:** "I was pleased to hear my calls had given him something to look forward to in the 3 months of lockdown and I find that most rewarding."

Giving people the opportunity to talk and share their concerns was a real benefit to them. For me, it was so gratifying to know that one call could be really appreciated."



## Outcome

**Terry remembers:** "Karen was so kind to me when she phoned. The big negative was I lost someone close in lockdown but Karen really helped. She picked it up in my voice. It did knock me but her regular phone call brought me back. Thanks to people like Karen our calls would turn from sadness to her laughing at my first efforts in baking!"

## What we provided

- ✓ Isolation alleviated
- ✓ Emotional support
- ✓ Less lonely
- ✓ More connected



# Our services

## Telephone Befriending

Our befriending service started from scratch just weeks after the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Throughout the year, we made over 16,800 befriending calls to over 1,080 people. We grew a huge team of over 100 staff and volunteers to provide comfort to older people during an incredibly difficult time.

For some, this is more than just a phone call, it is something to look forward to in an otherwise isolated and lonely existence.

Some clients have family, but don't want to bother them or worry them by explaining their loneliness. Others have no one and live alone, their friends and family having passed away. Befrienders offer a listening ear and a friendly chat but also consider client's overall wellbeing, checking if there are any additional support needs in terms of mobility, nutrition, help at home or personal care.

Loneliness can be devastating. We want to be there for as many people locally as possible as we know that in many cases, it's not just a phone line, it is a lifeline.

16,800

Throughout the year, we made over 16,800 befriending calls to older people.

### Service spotlight

#### Enid\*, 91 lives alone and has no living family or friends

Frail and unable to venture out much, her only human contact is her paid helper, who visits for a short time twice a week and now, her befriending calls from AUKWSBH. "Everything is grim in my life" Enid said, and of her neighbours "No one takes an interest in me, they don't really like old people."

### Outcome

**Enid enjoys her befriending calls, which allow her to connect, reminisce and laugh, in her otherwise incredibly isolated life.**

As well as providing a listening ear, her befriender has found local social groups she might consider joining and has also investigated alert pendants, in case she has a fall. "You are very kind to look into these things for me." said Enid "It's so nice to think that someone cares!"

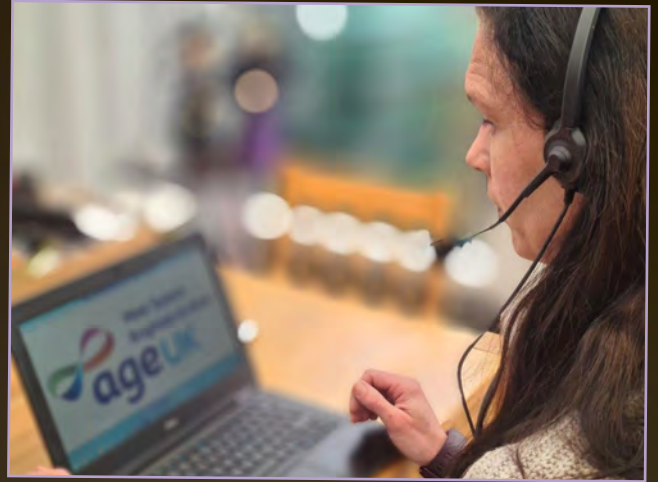
### What we provided

- ✓ Emotional support
- ✓ Isolation alleviated
- ✓ Wider service support

## Calling out for a hero

This year, one of our staff members went above and beyond by making almost 2,000 befriending calls to lonely older people. Amanda Kane made over 1,950 telephone calls to 458 different individuals between March 2020 and 2021.

Amanda said “I knew I was making a huge amount of calls, but I was speechless when I heard the total number! I really enjoy ringing people, although it’s been tough emotionally at times as I’ve often chatted to those who are at a very low ebb. Some have been bereaved during the pandemic, some were experiencing severe mental health issues due to lockdown and others told me I’m the first person they spoke to all week. Our befriending service is still running and it’s a team effort, with staff and volunteers across West Sussex, Brighton & Hove pulling together to make sure older people have someone to turn to.”



**Amanda made almost 2,000 befriending calls during the pandemic.**





## Our services

### Help at Home

One of the cornerstones of our work is to enable older people to remain independent for longer. Many want to stay in their own homes but don't always have the ability to take on household chores in the way they used to, due to frailty, mobility issues or ill health.

We pride ourselves on being an organisation people can trust to help them out with day to day tasks, when things have become too much to cope with alone.

Last year, we supported over 1,800 people at home, via our team of reliable, friendly assistants. We offer services like cleaning, laundry, bed changing, basic food preparation, shopping and collection of prescriptions. If someone is in difficulty, or unable to answer the door, our fully trained home assistants follow a pre-agreed emergency plan until they know our client is safe.

We're hoping to be there for more people than ever in the year ahead, taking jobs off people's hands so life is that little bit easier.

# 1,821

**Last year 1,821 people accessed our Help at Home service.**

### Patti & Jade's story

**"She really is my guardian angel."**



**One of our home helps, Jade, supported Patti Thraves throughout lockdown by delivering groceries and offering socially distanced doorstep support.**

When lockdown eased, Jade was able to help Patti around the house and take her out to do her own shopping. Patti and Jade hit it off right from the start and Patti admitted that although she had been in touch with various agencies in the past, she had never felt more comfortable at home with anyone.

### Outcome

**Patti says:**

"Once Jade was introduced I couldn't have been happier and feel very lucky with the help she was able to provide. I trust her and look forward to her coming on Fridays – and she loves my cat! You have to live your life and I'm so glad for her help and companionship. She really is my guardian angel."

# Our services

## Doorstep Deliveries

At the beginning of the pandemic many older people found themselves too frightened to leave home.

We received distressing calls from some of the most vulnerable older people in our area, afraid of the virus, but short on food and unsure where their next meal was coming from. We knew immediately that we had to step in to help those who had no one to turn to. Our doorstep deliveries began.

In the last year, we have made doorstep visits to thousands of older people, delivering emergency food packages, groceries, vital medication and frozen meals. During lockdown, our team of staff and volunteers put aside their usual roles to ensure people had the essentials, travelling the length and breadth of our area to reach as many people as possible. These visits weren't just about food or medicine, in some cases we were the only visitors our clients received. Our doorstep chats may have been chilly, socially distanced and done through masks but the human contact made all the difference in what for many, was an incredibly lonely time.

Some clients remain too frail or anxious to visit our centres so we'll continue to do all we can to support them at home. Grocery shopping is still available through our help at home service and our meal deliveries continue, offering nutritious, easy to cook main courses and desserts. These are often delivered with the latest copy of Connect magazine, an activity kit, a bag of support and most importantly, the opportunity for a friendly chat with one of our team. If you can't come to us, we'll come to you. A BIG thank you to our partner, Sky – continuing to support us by helping older people in our communities with meal deliveries and Bags of Support. Without their help we couldn't have reached so many people when they needed us the most.

### Service spotlight

**“I’m so humbled and grateful for all the help.”**



All of our chefs played an important part during the pandemic. Our Mid Sussex Chef, Caryl was busy cooking up her customers a treat – one of her grandmother's secret recipes.

“It's a secret recipe that's been in the family for years. Nobody knows the exact ingredients of my sausage plait and I was sworn to secrecy! I loved it so much when I was a child and growing up and it's proving a big hit with our customers.”



### A client in Brighton felt his doorstep support went above and beyond:

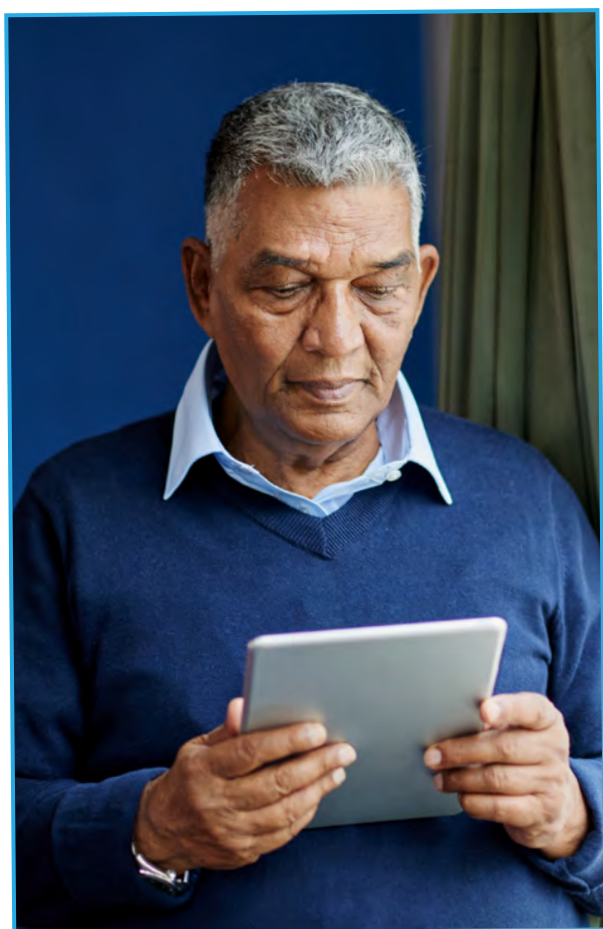
“I’m so humbled and grateful for all the help you’ve given me including regular calls, food parcels, shopping, activity packs and help walking my dog daily...You’ve turned my life around and I’m no longer in that constant dark place.”



# Our services

## Information & Advice

Our team offers an expert, free, confidential information and advice service to people over 50, their families and carers.



Our friendly advisors cover a huge range of topics including welfare benefits, housing needs, health and social care, leisure and social activities, money advice, care planning and advice for carers. We are also happy to signpost or make referrals, if we can't assist with a particular issue.

Our trained experts supported over 4,000 people during this period with their queries.

One area of expertise is welfare benefits, with our benefits checks identifying any unclaimed benefits that people may be entitled to. This year, the team identified an incredible £3.8 million in benefits that older people could claim, or we could support them to claim.

The additional income has made a difference to hundreds of individuals and families who may otherwise have really struggled financially in retirement.

### How the I&A Team works

They provide clients with information that is accurate and up-to-date, explaining the choices available and enabling our clients to make informed decisions.

The team will take action on a client's behalf if they need support or will point them in the right direction if they are unable to help.

Clients can speak to them in confidence without judgement. They will help tackle prejudice and discrimination and will always work in the best interest of the client. This service is free of charge.

# 4,000

**We supported over 4,000 older people with Information & Advice queries.**

## What the I&A Team cover

Whatever older people are facing, we want them to be able to turn to us. Our I&A team can provide information and support on a whole range of issues including:

- Financial difficulties
- Care homes or independent living
- Welfare benefits
- Staying warm in winter
- Social groups and activities
- Health and social care
- Housing needs
- Advice for carers



## Prevention Assessment Team

This service is about allowing people to live independently for as long as possible. Our Community Support Workers assess care and social needs and look at older people's general health and wellbeing. The team is able to prevent avoidable health issues like falls, or respiratory illnesses due to living in a cold home. Keeping people safe and well at home was even more crucial during the pandemic. The service continued virtually following the onset of Covid-19 and our Community Support Workers were allocated to support Community Hubs during the crisis.

## Service spotlight



**“...it really made such a difference at a very difficult time.”**

**One of our clients, Hannah\* wanted some advice about her father's care.**

“I contacted Age UK following my father's accident as I needed some advice and support and didn't know where to turn to.”

## Outcome

**“Thanks to them and Carewise, whom I was referred to, I was able to check through his benefit entitlements and make a financial plan for him. I was also put in touch with the WSCC social care team who helped me to understand my father's care needs and this in turn, helped me to choose the right care for him. I'm very grateful for this support and it really made such a difference at a very difficult time.”**

## What we provided

- ✓ Financial support provided
- ✓ Partnership working
- ✓ Link to ongoing support



# Our services

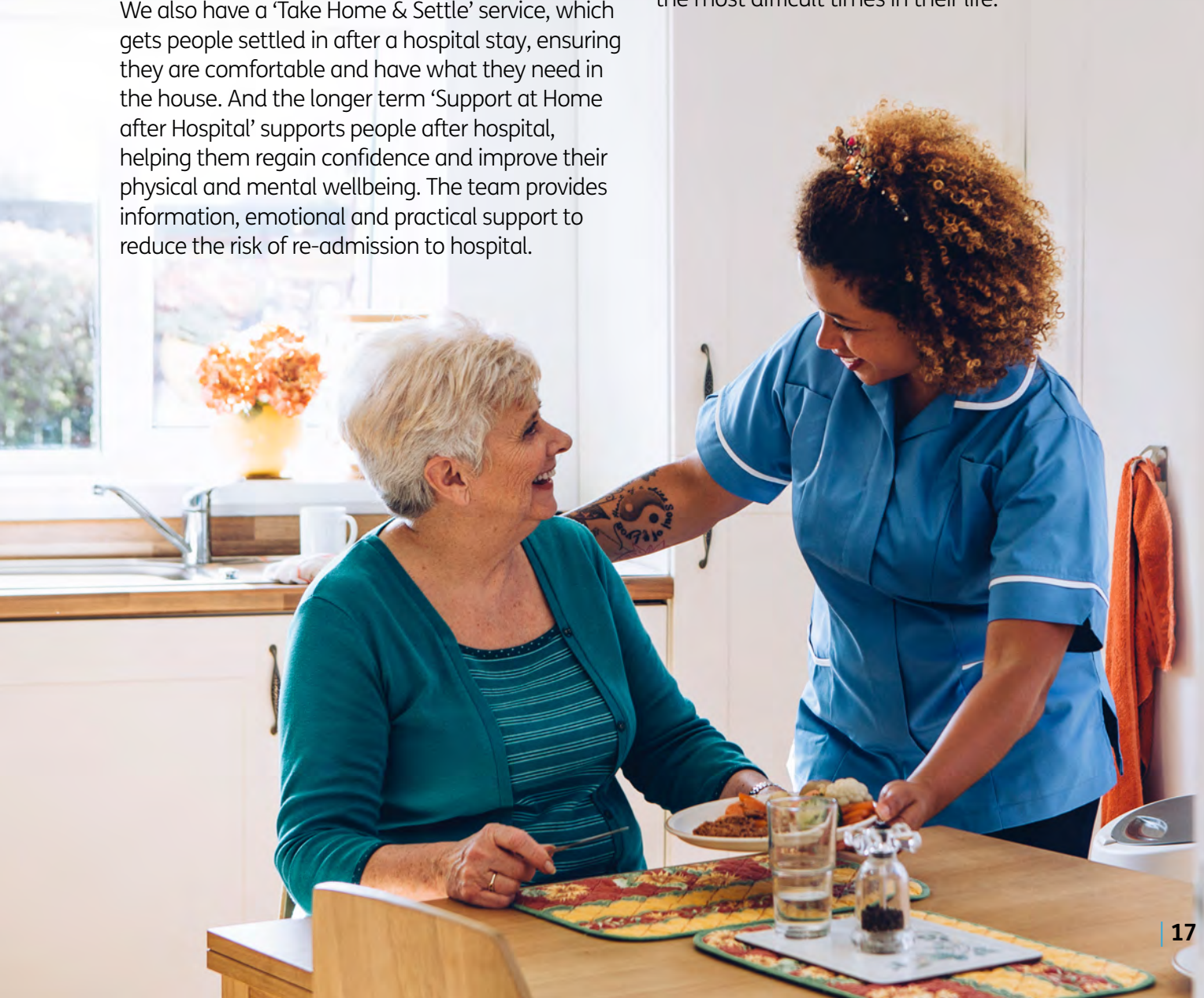
## Crisis Care & Health Services

We have a number of services to support older people when they need it the most. Our crisis service can step in when older people find themselves suddenly ill, facing an emergency or after a hospital discharge.

We offer personal and domestic care at short notice for people in their own homes as well as a nail cutting service for people who struggle to take on the task themselves. Over the last year we've supported around 200 people through our nail cutting service alone.

We also have a 'Take Home & Settle' service, which gets people settled in after a hospital stay, ensuring they are comfortable and have what they need in the house. And the longer term 'Support at Home after Hospital' supports people after hospital, helping them regain confidence and improve their physical and mental wellbeing. The team provides information, emotional and practical support to reduce the risk of re-admission to hospital.

This year these services helped over 500 people, often some of our most vulnerable clients, offering support which makes a huge difference to their lives. These tend to be people who don't have anyone else to turn to when things go wrong and we're incredibly proud to support them at some of the most difficult times in their life.



## Wellbeing Support

One of the key pillars of our work is helping people remain healthy in later life. General wellbeing is a big part of that and we can offer information and support on healthy living, nutrition, hydration and exercise.

We have a range of exercise classes on offer and held more than 260 this year, despite the pandemic. Our centre in Bognor has a state of the art gym with over 170 members and we have our own exercise videos on YouTube, covering everything from Pilates and circuits to chair based stretching. Our groups and classes develop skills and promote good mental health too. When Coronavirus kept us apart we produced and delivered activity packs to stave off boredom and launched initiatives like our online art club.

## Social Prescribing

Helping to connect people to services within their community, our aim is to support their overall wellbeing. Support can be given for a range of issues but housing problems, finances and social isolation are the top three. We link people up with organisations or services that can help them live more contented, healthier and fulfilled lives.

## Village Agents

Our merger with Age UK Horsham District this year meant we inherited a fantastic service for those living in the surrounding rural areas. Our 'Village Agents' and Rural Outreach Worker support local groups and clubs, help set up new ones and provide a friendly face, assisting those in rural communities with advice and practical help.

Our staff can also put clients in contact with other useful organisations, promoting health and independence within the community. The team take pride in connecting with people in their 'patch' and helping them to make the most of later life.

## Service spotlight

### Edith\* – adjusting to life following amputation

**Edith had a long hospital stay which included a leg amputation. Having been very independent prior to her admission, she now appeared despondent and was struggling to adapt.**



Our team supported Edith, focusing on both her physical and mental health. We offered weekly volunteer visits, help at home for shopping and cleaning, benefits advice and a referral to the social prescribing service.

### Outcome

**Edith was supported to adapt to her new life and as well as securing practical help for day to day activities, she was able to access ongoing support, to build confidence and improve her social life. Our service not only enables older people to survive following life changing hospital stays, but to thrive.**

### What we provided

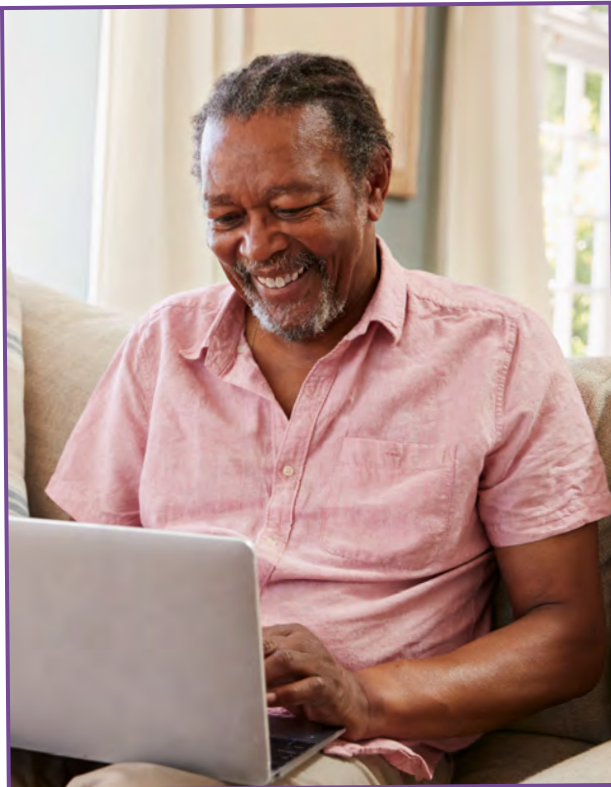
- ✓ Reduce risk of hospital readmission
- ✓ Link to ongoing support
- ✓ Maintain level of independence



# Our services

## Tech Advice

Staying home and staying safe has never been so important during the last year and technology has been vital to help us stay in touch with family and friends. Our Techno Team have been a lifeline to many who needed support and advice.



If you're internet savvy, you'll know the difference that getting online can make to your life, allowing you to connect, shop, bank and communicate. Those not familiar with computers might find it daunting, feel it's 'too late' to learn or that the whole thing is completely beyond them. However, our Techno Team is here to help.

Throughout the pandemic and when people were told to stay at home, our team of friendly and experienced volunteers, known as the 'Techno Team', were on hand to help absolute beginners get online, or help those with some experience make the most of their digital devices.

Some people found our support not just useful, but life changing, as they were now able to work or volunteer more easily, shop online and keep in touch with friends or family.

Video calls were a lifeline during lockdown and people who are able to get online can access any information and support they might need more quickly.

Post pandemic we're keen to continue with digital engagement, showing people a whole new world at their fingertips that can make life easier, less lonely and more fun.

# 100s

**We supported people across our communities, making hundreds of calls to provide online advice and help so that people could continue to contact friends and family as well as join in activities to keep them in touch with the outside world.**

# Our services

## Dementia Services

Through our Daybreak Dementia Support we've helped both individual and carer navigate life with dementia.

Our work with people living with dementia and their carers, is one area where our impact can be immediate and life changing. Having someone to turn to who completely understands the challenges dementia poses and who can offer some personalised support can make a huge difference.

We've created a safe, stimulating environment to help people living with the condition fight back against its progress, using a range of activities which work on motor skills, memory and movement.

For carers, we offer respite and the opportunity to take some time for themselves, knowing that those they support are getting the best possible care.

Caring responsibilities can take their toll and a regular break can make all the difference in terms of protecting the carer's own physical and mental health. The two elements, for client and carer, work hand in hand.

# 130

We are currently supporting over 130 people at our dementia clubs.

### Service spotlight



## The importance of social interaction for those with dementia

**One of our visitors, Elaine\* shared that her husband's dementia had progressed significantly during lockdown.**

He was no longer verbally communicating and just sat in his chair all day, looking at the same books. Staff were prepared for the changes during his first Daybreak support session back, but were amazed at how involved he got, calling out quiz answers and really interacting with the group.

### Outcome

**Elaine was moved to tears when she returned at the end of the session and saw him so engaged. He continues to attend our sessions and his wife feels she has part of him back that she thought was lost forever.**

### What we provided

- ✓ Emotional support
- ✓ Less lonely, more connected
- ✓ More confident and resilient



# Communicating our message

## Changing in difficult times

Communication was more important than ever for us this year as we adapted our services throughout the pandemic.

As well as spreading the word about our services and activities, we wanted to draw attention to the impact Covid-19 was having on older people, promote community support for the older generation and ensure that older people's voices were heard and represented in the media and online. Making ourselves heard was key to communicating to our customers during this time.

### Leaflets & promo

We know that many older people aren't necessarily online, nor do they want to be, so it's important we continue to use traditional marketing, like leaflets, alongside our digital strategy. This year we produced a new leaflet about our charity which covers volunteering, fundraising and information about our 'Bags of Support' initiative. We also produced a new partners guide, a meal delivery services flyer, a leaflet about our 'Support at Home After Hospital' service, a cream tea flyer and a booklet about room hire at our centres. You can pick these up at our venues, or give us a call if there's something specific you're after.

### Events

From the Big Knit fundraising events, to the 2.6 challenge; hula hooping at the South of England Show to cream teas across our communities we've not stopped over the last year! With our newly merged brand we've had cause to celebrate and have fun whilst spreading the word which is exactly what we did!

### Media coverage – read all about it!

Throughout the year, we produced and distributed a number of news stories for the local media, on everything from our pandemic support and fundraising, to keeping warm in winter and avoiding Covid scams. Local coverage of our stories was widespread and we were able to help keep older people and their needs in the spotlight, during an incredibly challenging time.

- We produced 14 news stories, sent as press releases to journalists.
- Online news sites published our stories on at least 50 occasions and print versions of the newspapers often followed suit.
- We were able to secure 27 local radio interviews on stations like BBC Sussex and Heart FM.

### Online reach

For those who are online, we have a range of ways to keep up to date with what we're up to at AUKWSBH. Our website, local Facebook pages, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube profiles all carry the latest information on our campaigns, fundraising, events and activities. Why not follow us, or join in the chat?

 [www.ageukwsbh.org.uk](http://www.ageukwsbh.org.uk)

   @ageukwsbh

 Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove

 Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove



## Launch of our magazine

Following the onset of the pandemic we quickly realised we needed to be able to support people at home. During lockdown, we wanted to help relieve boredom and ensure our clients were aware of the support still available. As a result, we began to produce our own brand new magazine – Connect. Filled with a mix of real life stories, information, advice and boredom busters we were able to let older people know that despite the temporary closure of our centres, we were still there for them. Connect allows us to promote our own services and to signpost people to others that might come in handy, whether provided by our partners or other community groups. Connect is now published quarterly and is a great way to keep up to date on what's happening near you as well as sharing fundraising and partnership news.





# Covid – the financial hit

## Working together during a crisis

At a time when we were needed the most, our income was hit the hardest. At one point during the pandemic, we were experiencing losses of approximately £50,000 each month, following the closure of our centres. Despite this, we transformed our services, handling thousands of referrals to help older people locally.





We did our best to mitigate the losses, launching an emergency fundraising appeal, applying for grants, requesting grocery donations and working with other local charities to pool resources and expertise.

## Bags of Support

In order to reach as many people as possible with support during the pandemic, we launched our Bags of Support in the autumn of 2020. The bags were designed to provide comfort and reassurance to older people, many of whom had been isolating for many months by this time. They contained items such as reusable face masks, hand sanitiser, information about services and support available, our Connect magazine and activity packs to entertain, inform and help keep them busy and maintain their wellbeing as well as a few little treats to brighten their time stuck indoors. The delivery of the bags by volunteers also helped to alleviate loneliness and boredom by enabling a staff member or volunteer to have a chat on the doorstep with the recipient.

We appealed to the local community to help us provide the items to go in the bags and this resulted in us receiving a huge number of handmade facemasks.

We are so grateful to everyone who helped us to provide our Bags of Support, including the generous funding and items for the bags we received from Freeman Brothers, Courtney Green Estate Agents, The Body Shop, Silver Charity, and the generous parish councils all across Sussex that supported us.

# 5,000

**In total and thanks to volunteer support, we distributed over 5,000 Bags of Support.**



## Fundraising

We faced many challenges during Covid-19, not only with delivering our services but also with raising income to keep the services running during the pandemic.

With all planned fundraising events cancelled, we were unable to continue fundraising in our usual ways. In order to ensure we could continue supporting older people at a critical time when they needed us more than ever, we had to quickly generate income through other methods while remaining Covid compliant.

This included applying for emergency Coronavirus funds, launching an emergency appeal, initiating a Cream Tea delivery campaign and sourcing funding and gifts in kind for our Bags of Support.

The effects of Covid-19 will be long lasting for many older people. If you'd like to support our vital work going forward – as a volunteer, corporately through your workplace or by becoming a regular or individual giver we would be incredibly grateful. We want to continue to be there for vulnerable older people as long as we're needed. With your help we can do even more.



# Covid – the financial hit

## Working together during a crisis

### Covid emergency appeal and individual gifts

We received some very welcome gifts during the pandemic to enable us to continue providing our vital services. This included one off donations from clients and supporters who we had helped during the year, new and ongoing regular gifts and we also launched our Covid-19 Emergency Appeal in November 2020. The appeal went out to all of our supporters by mail and email and via Connect Magazine as well as through PR and all of our digital channels which, in turn, helped us to raise vital funds to support older people during the winter months.



### Covid emergency funding and support

At the onset of the pandemic, with fundraising events cancelled and in challenging circumstances to raise donations, we made a number of applications for emergency funding to ensure we could continue to provide essential support throughout the lockdowns and restrictions.

#### A quote from one of our customers:

"I would like to pass on my thanks to those that have provided me with meals, and I was touched by the extras I received, apples/books and Easter Egg and this week some juice. You should be "congratulated" on the work you are all doing. I really look forward to the befriending calls, and having the ability to chat to somebody, so thank you."

We were very grateful to receive funding and support from many organisations. These included donated items including food, toiletries, books and activities as well face masks, hand sanitiser and much more. A number of trusts, foundations, local companies and other organisations and agencies also provided much needed money as donations to enable us to support local older people. We would like to say a huge thank you to everyone that helped in one way or another.



## Cream Tea Deliveries

With much of our support focused on doorstep deliveries during the year, we felt that a fundraiser based on this idea would not only help to raise vital money but also provide a welcome treat for people and be Covid compliant. We launched our Cream Tea fundraiser over the summer with the idea that people could order a Cream Tea for themselves and/or treat a loved one, in return for a donation towards our work. With help from our amazing volunteers we delivered our cream teas to villages and towns across our communities to help support our Coronavirus Appeal.





# Our volunteers

## The lifeblood of our charity

When Covid hit, we needed all our resources to be there for as many people as possible and this is when our amazing volunteers stepped in. Not only that, we managed to recruit more volunteers during the pandemic, until we had an 'army' of over 450 people helping us support our clients.

Roles were matched to people based on their interests, skills and experience and included telephone befriending, doorstep visiting, shopping, delivering medication, offering dementia support, assisting in our kitchens and manning phones to help people access the information or support they needed.

There's a famous quote which says: **When I was a boy and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me: "Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping."**

Our volunteers are those helpers. When the pandemic was at its peak and things were difficult and frightening they stepped up to help others. They are still working tirelessly today and we couldn't be more grateful.

The impact of Covid continues and demand for our services is high.

Keith is one of the volunteer gardeners at our Horsham Centre. In the gardens at Lavinia House he works with other volunteers to maintain the pretty gardens and also takes pride in growing fruit and veg for the centre's kitchen which is then served up in various dishes which the café has to offer.





## Dog walker Matt

**One of our fabulous volunteers, Brighton's Matt Rood came to the rescue to volunteer his services, when Covid hit the UK by offering free dog walking to our clients who are unable to leave home.**

Matt owns local dog-walking business ROODDOG which covers Brighton, Hove and Shoreham, so decided to put his experience to good use during lockdown.

Matt, who started up his dog walking business around the time of winning Mr Gay Europe said: "I had to close my business down the day after the Covid lockdown started in the UK so we weren't walking any dogs until the restrictions were eased."



While in lockdown Matt was happy to help AUKWSBH by offering his dog walking services free of charge. "I jumped at the chance to be buddied up with Chris who can't leave his flat. So I do his shopping for him and take his dog, Tyson, for walks every day," he said.

## Receptionist Sheila



**This year, our amazing Crawley Centre volunteer receptionist has celebrated 30 wonderful years of service with AUKWSBH.**

Sheila Jones says one of the things she really loves about her role is meeting and greeting people.

"I'm a sociable person and I like to be out and about. Volunteering has enabled me to do this and means I can help others."

**Sheila celebrated her special anniversary with staff and friends at the Crawley Centre.**

"I really enjoy volunteering at the Crawley Centre and have seen many changes over the years! Thank you so much for the lovely flowers, balloons, delicious cake, card, certificate and bubbly. We were so lucky with the fine weather," she added.



# Thank yous

## Kind messages from our customers

We have been overwhelmed by the messages of support and ‘thank yous’ received from our customers and supporters during the pandemic. We wanted to take this opportunity to thank staff, volunteers and everyone that has helped in one way or another during this extraordinary time. Here’s a selection of kind messages received...

**It's been so nice having a familiar person to talk to weekly, I really look forward to your calls.**

May I take this opportunity to thank you for your assistance with this matter as I believe you have gone over and above the call of duty for us by having this application scanned directly to WSCC Blue Badge Unit. It is a refreshing change when people go out of their way to help you and also take a pride in their work, thank you again.

*Your Team are an inspiration for life, Thank you for being there and your advice.*

**I have just received a second hamper from you and I am writing to say ‘Thank you very much’... what a lovely thought – it is much appreciated. There is very little to cheer us in these difficult times so it feels a bit like Christmas to find all the goodies that you have included.**

What a lovely surprise! A cream tea delivered today. Thank you so much. We both really enjoyed the gift and the kind thought behind it and we look forward to returning to the Laburnum Centre sometime.

You make me feel like a nice warm fire on a cold day.

I just wanted to thank you so much for checking in with my parents on a regular basis. They let me know when you ring and it's great to know if they do have any problems with food or prescriptions there's a support system in place. You and your team are doing an amazing job at this challenging time. I hope you are looking after yourself and that you are well.

**THANKS TO ALL THE CENTRE STAFF WHO MADE ME FEEL SO WELCOME BEFORE THE RECENT LOCKDOWN. HOPE TO BE BACK SOON AND MISS YOU ALL.**

I'm so pleased with all of the wonderful carers who have visited. Everything was so much harder before you were involved – most importantly I now feel safe.

*My mum has not been long out of hospital has very limited mobility and is very deaf. She has 3 carers a day preparing her food so she is having a lot of ready meals, however she was delighted with the tins, fruit, bread, milk, eggs and sweets. The potatoes and onion we have given to another elderly neighbour who will make good use of them. Thank you all for this, every single volunteer at Age UK and at Kitchen Cleaning Group.*

Thank you for all your help over the past week. It has been life changing.

**You've put so much into helping all us OAPs. It really has made such a big difference, with food parcels, and phone calls with positive thoughts. I think you are all wonderful. Keep Smiling!**

*I really look forward to receiving your magazine. It's so easy to read and brings some joy to my day with all the happy news in it!*

**Thank you, once again, for my shopping and for the goody bag. I think the organisation is fantastic and I'm very grateful for all the rallying around that has been done for me.**

**I'VE JUST RECEIVED MY FOOD DELIVERY AND CAN'T TELL YOU HOW GRATEFUL I AM FOR YOUR SUPPORT. THANK YOU SO MUCH.**

**What is the Volunteer? A poem...**

The Volunteer is the one on the street, who helps you shed the chaff from the wheat.  
Helps make the sun shine on a rainy day, makes you shed your blues away.  
Makes you see from a different angle, when your mind is all in a tangle.  
Invites you for coffee, not just me, but many people that they can see.  
Hope for the future and lovely as can be...  
That's a Volunteer, salt of the earth, who takes the time to give you worth.



# Our core services

## Expanding our reach

Despite the difficult year and our emergency response, our team still managed to look to the future and spent time carefully considering our next steps. Part of this process included tendering for new contracts with West Sussex County Council and we were successful as lead partner in ten of the eleven social support contracts on offer.

The five year contracts will enable us to work with key community partners and expand services in the wake of the pandemic. We are seeking views and ideas from existing clients over the coming months as we re-double our efforts to tackle issues such as frailty, dementia and loneliness.

Together with partners Age UK East Grinstead, Carers Support, Community Transport Sussex, Guild Care (which also secured the social support contract in Worthing), Royal Voluntary Service, West Sussex Mind and West Sussex County Council we hope to reach more people, work from more venues in the community and offer a wider range of services and activities for the over 50s. In addition, the new contracts cover support for carers, as well as helping people home from hospital and supporting them in the first few weeks of being home.

**Our partnership with the Council means we can reach more people than ever, both at home and in the community.**



West Sussex Brighton & Hove  
**ageUK**

**Our Partners & Services**  
**2021**

*Get in touch to find out how we can help you!*

0800 019 1310  
info@ageukwsbh.org.uk

www.ageukwsbh.org.uk  
@ageukwsbh

# Power through partnerships

## Making us stronger

We know that partnership working makes us stronger. We couldn't have the same impact without our many and varied partners and we appreciate their contribution to our work, whether sharing expertise and resources, working with us to offer holistic care or offering financial backing.



We are, of course, a brand partner of the national charity Age UK – the leading older people's charity in the UK. We have access to their network of support, advice, information and materials to help our clients.

As Age Concern and then as Age UK we have been a founding partner of many long-established initiatives including Carewise, Prevention Assessment Teams and Social Prescribing. Creating and developing innovative new services through high level collaborations and partnerships is part of our DNA.

We partner with a wide range of parish, town, city, district and borough councils, as well as the county council, the wider health authority and clinical commissioning groups.

We work with healthcare professionals across the field and with older people's networks, health and wellbeing boards and safeguarding hubs including Ageing Well led by Impact Initiatives in Brighton.

**We also deeply value our partnerships in communities with local people, organisations and charities, all sharing the same mission.**

Through corporate fundraising, grant giving, sponsorship and individual giving, the relationships we hold go far and wide. Such generosity, along with that from our commissioned services, enables us to be there for more older people locally. We couldn't be more grateful for the support.







# The future

## Helping people love later life

As we head towards our 65th anniversary year we're bigger and better than ever. Older people and their changing needs are at the core of everything we do so we're currently in the process of working with them, to ensure we're reflecting their needs, wants and aspirations.

We're keen to hear what people would like us to provide in the future and the existing services they value the most.

It's important for us to help people wherever they are, rather than just expecting them to come to us. We've found our centre visitor numbers are still significantly lower than pre-Covid levels and we're determined to continue to support people at home, as well as in the community.

Our centres remain at the heart of our charity and we're aiming to provide more modern buildings which can act as intergenerational hubs.

In addition, we're branching out into offering services in venues such as cafés and pubs, making us more accessible across our area.

We're creating a team of Community Agents who can map localities to understand the demographics and more importantly, the needs of over 50s in each area. One size doesn't fit all, so we know that a truly local understanding, with a tailored individual approach is going to be most helpful for our clients.



Our 65th anniversary will be a time for reflection, celebration and ambition. Our aim is to help people to love later life. Where that's not possible, we believe we can always make a difference.

This year we want to provide the best possible services and activities, amplify older people's voices with our campaigning, and be there for more people than ever before.

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Thank you for your support  
and we hope to see you soon.



# Our team

## Our Senior Management Team & Trustees



**Helen Rice**  
Chief Executive



**Sarah Watson**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Jo Clarke**  
Director of Partnerships  
and Localities



**Susan  
Brigstock-Parker**  
Head of Health



**Parul Chatterjee**  
Head of People



**Angela Croucher**  
Head of Finance



**Claire Long**  
Head of Relationship  
Management

### Our Trustees

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**Amanda Latham (Vice-Chair)**  
**Caroline Instance**  
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#### Registered Office:

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West Sussex, BN17 6BP

**Registered charity number:** 1086323

**Company number:** 04146487

#### November 2021

The information and articles in this document were correct at time of going to print based on data available at time of collation.

Stock images have been used throughout and do not depict individuals featured in the editorial unless clearly stated. Additional images sourced from AUKWSBH or the Centre for Ageing Better. Photo contribution on P24 with thanks to RAFBF. Names with \* in case studies have been changed.

Age UK West Sussex, Brighton & Hove is a local, independent charity that has been supporting older people across the county for over 60 years.

## We'd love your support

Our goal is to inspire and enable people in our communities to love later life. You can help AUKWSBH in so many ways



**Donate**



**Volunteer**



**Fundraise**

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 [www.ageukwsbh.org.uk](http://www.ageukwsbh.org.uk)

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